

U.S. Application Serial No.: 10/075,262

Amdt. Dated: March 22, 2004

Reply to Office Action of: October 21, 2003

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claim 1. (amended). A modular laboratory cabinet assembly, comprising:
a pair of substantially similar unitary housing end units arranged in an inverted spaced apart relation to each other, each said end unit having a base bounded by front, rear, first and second sides terminating at a common peripheral edge separating interior and exterior surfaces of said end unit, [said peripheral edge having a recessed segment extending along said front side,] each said base having a plurality of elongated supporting members with guiding apertures passing therethrough; and

at least one unitary U-shaped housing module interposed between said end units and having a rear side, a first side, a second side and a pair of front side portions depending inwardly from said first and second sides of the housing module, [each front side portion terminating at a substantially vertical edge], each said side[s] portion of the housing module being defined by at least outer and inner surfaces and terminating at peripheral edges thereof, first and second ledges extending along and transversely to the respective first and second side portions of the housing module, a plurality of columns extending outwardly from said ledge and being spaced from the adjacent inner surfaces of said respective front, rear,

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first and second side portions, each said column having a longitudinal guiding channel passing therethrough [a lower inwardly depending ledge, a plurality of columns each having a longitudinal guiding channel passing therethrough]; [and]

[a door pivotably attached to the front sides of said housing end units and a plurality of connecting members].

wherein, the longitudinal supporting members of the end units are substantially aligned with the respective columns of the module, so that the guiding apertures and the guiding channels form a continuous air-tight passages extending through the entire assembly to receive the connecting members.

Claim 2. (canceled). A modular laboratory cabinet assembly as recited in claim 1, further comprising frictional means integrally formed on the exterior surface of the base of each end unit for minimizing slipping between a vertically stacked said cabinet assemblies.

Claim 3. (canceled). A modular laboratory cabinet assembly as recited in claim 2, wherein said frictional means further comprises first and second pairs of outwardly projecting and diagonally opposed engaging segments, in each said pair the engaging segments are positioned at an angle to each other, said first set of engaging segments being disposed peripherally inward with respect to said second set of engaging segments, in a stacked cabinet arrangement the first pair of engaging segments disposed on an upper housing end unit of a lower one of said

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stacked cabinet assemblies frictionally engages the second pair of engaging segments disposed on an inverted lower housing end unit of an upper one of said stacked cabinet assemblies, and vice versa.

Claim 4. (amended). A modular laboratory cabinet assembly as recited in claim 20 [1], further comprising a pair of ribs extending longitudinally from the outer surfaces of the first and second sides of each housing end unit.

Claim 5. (original). A modular laboratory cabinet assembly as recited in claim 4, wherein said ribs have finger-receiving recesses oriented in opposite directions formed therein, one of said recess oriented in one direction is positioned between two adjacent recesses oriented in the opposite direction.

Claim 6. (original). A modular laboratory cabinet assembly as recited in claim 4, wherein in a horizontal orientation of the assembly in which the bases of the end units are positioned substantially vertically said ribs function as support feet for supporting the cabinet assembly on a support surface.

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Claim 7. (amended). A modular laboratory cabinet assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein [the lower inwardly depending] each said ledge of said U-shaped housing module further comprises an inwardly depending step for supporting a shelf when said storage assembly is supported on a surface in a vertical orientation.

Claim 8. (original). A modular laboratory cabinet assembly as recited in claim 7, wherein the base of each of said housing end unit further comprises integrally formed planar shelf supporting portions extending substantially perpendicularly from the interior surface thereof for supporting a shelf when said assembly is supported on a surface in a horizontal orientation.

Claim 9. (amended). A modular laboratory cabinet assembly as recited in claim 1, further comprising a door pivotably attached to the front sides of said housing end units and a plurality of connecting members and also comprising protrusions having door hinge pin receiving apertures formed therein and positioned at opposite ends of the exterior surface of the front side of each of said end units.

Claim 10. (amended). A modular laboratory cabinet assembly as recited in claim 9, wherein said door further comprises:

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a pair of [integrally formed] upper and lower hinge pins sized, shaped and oriented for being received through said hinge pin receiving apertures;

an interior recessed window portion defined by front, top, bottom and hinged sides; and

a flange portion disposed along an unhinged side of said door, the flange portion having a pair of apertures extending therethrough and positioned on opposite sides of a[n integrally formed] door handle portion thereof, the apertures sized and shaped for snugly receiving therethrough [said end unit] integral protrusions [therethrough] associated with said end units.

Claim 11. (original). A modular laboratory cabinet assembly as recited in claim 10, further comprising gasket members interposed between the non-recessed segments of the peripheral edges of said end units and the corresponding upper edge and lower ledge of said U-shaped housing module; said door having a gasket disposed on an interior surface thereof; and further comprising means for maintaining said door in a closed position.

Claim 12. (amended). A modular laboratory cabinet assembly as recited in claim 1, wherein said supporting members are positioned at each corner of the respective end unit extending outwardly from the inner surface thereof, each said column is positioned at a respective corner of the U-shaped housing module and

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extend from the [lower inwardly depending] respective ledges, along [an] said inner surfaces of the first and second sides of the module.

Claim 13. (original). A modular laboratory cabinet assembly as recited in claim 10, wherein the assembly is adapted for having a humidity controlled interior, the door further comprising at least one integrally formed contiguous wall protruding from the interior surface of said window front side.

Claim 14. (original). A modular laboratory cabinet assembly as recited in claim 12, wherein the connecting elements extend through said respective continuous air-tight passages, said connecting members having fastening means provided at the opposite ends thereof and engaging the top sides of said end units in a manner urging said end units toward one another.

Claim 15. (original). A modular laboratory cabinet assembly as recited in claim 14, wherein flexible members are provided between abutting ends of the supporting members and the columns to further enhance air-tightness of the assembly.

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Claim 16. (amended). A modular laboratory cabinet assembly as recited in claim 7 [1], wherein said at least one unitary U-shaped housing module comprises a plurality of modules provided in a stacked arrangement, the assembly further comprising:

peripheral housing gasket members interposed between the peripheral edges of the adjacent ones of said stacked modules.

Claim 17. (original). A modular laboratory cabinet assembly as recited in claim 16, wherein upon said cabinet assembly being provided on a support surface in a vertical orientation, the assembly further comprises a plurality of shelves supported on said step portions.

Claim 18. (amended). A modular laboratory cabinet assembly as recited in claim 16, wherein upon said cabinet assembly being provided in a horizontal orientation on a support surface, the assembly further comprising a plurality of shelves supported on [said] an end unit planar shelf supporting portions.

Claim 19. (original). A modular laboratory cabinet assembly as recited in claim 1, further comprising of an arrangement for maintaining said door in a closed position.

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Claim 20. (new). A modular laboratory cabinet assembly, comprising:

a pair of substantially similar unitary housing end units arranged in an inverted spaced apart relation to each other, each said end unit having a base bounded by front, rear, first and second side portions terminating at a common peripheral edge separating interior and exterior surfaces of said end unit;

at least one unitary U-shaped housing module interposed between said substantially similar end units and having a rear side, a first side, a second side and a pair of front side portions depending inwardly from said first and second sides of the housing module; and

a frictional arrangement provided at said exterior surface of the base of each said end unit, said frictional arrangement comprises first and second pairs of outwardly projecting and diagonally opposed engaging segments, each said engaging segment consists of two engaging elements positioned at an angle to each other, in each said frictional arrangement said first set of engaging segments being disposed peripherally inward with respect to said second set of engaging segments,

wherein, to minimize slipping between vertically stacked said cabinet assemblies the first pair of engaging segments disposed on an upper housing end unit of a lower one of said stacked cabinet assemblies frictionally engages the second pair of engaging segments disposed on an inverted lower housing end unit of an upper one of said stacked cabinet assemblies, and vice versa.